

Storyland

This tour stop is a favorite of people who prefer individual examples to statistical data.

- *If you seek numerical information, [Numberland](#) should please you.*
- *If the experiences of the four special volunteers featured here whet your appetite for more stories, visit [Fedland](#).*

Suzie Karsky an FVC member from outside the Greater L.A. area, works as a Controller for the Federal Aviation Administration at Grand Canyon Airport, Arizona. She volunteers for 24 hours monthly from May to September, for Preventive Search & Rescue (PSAR). "The primary role of the volunteers is to educate hikers. In addition, we are trained in basic first aid and rescue and work with trained medics when a situation dictates.

The Canyon's extreme conditions contribute to an unusual medical condition called hyponatremia. In short, the body sweats out more salts than the hiker is taking in. Hikers worsen the situation unknowingly by increasing water intake. Symptoms of hyponatremia are quite similar to symptoms of heat exhaustion; however, treatment is not. Drinking more water without appropriate food intake escalates the condition. The volunteers are posted at the trail heads and part-way down the trails to answer questions visitors may have about hiking the Canyon. We also identify people who appear to be inadequately prepared, and inform them of the conditions they are about to encounter. On a given summer day, there are 10 to 15 life-threatening situations handled by rangers and volunteers on

Canyon trails. We hike the trails in a range of weather conditions including temperatures from near freezing at the rim of the Canyon to 120 degrees at the bottom. High winds, thunderstorms and lightning with the potential for flash flood conditions are common during the summer monsoon season.

Deaths in the Canyon have decreased considerably since the PSAR program began in the mid-1990's. Preventive programs such as this one save taxpayers millions of dollars, and more importantly, encourage a pleasant visit to the magnificent Grand Canyon National Park." Suzie noted several reasons for volunteering, including feeling good about herself doing it and increasing her knowledge and skills.

Debra Kakallis works for the US Customs Service Los Angeles Laboratory on Terminal Island. For the last ten years, she has volunteered about 36 hours annually at the Casa Youth Shelter in Los Alamitos, where, “I cook meals regularly for 12 residents and 6 staff about once per month.” At Light and Life Christian Fellowship Recovery in Long Beach, she has volunteered about 210 hours annually for the last five years: “I teach a recovery class weekly,” helping 12 to 16 people per week. Motivated to make the world a better place, Debra asks, “How can I expect anyone to be involved if I am not involved?”



“This inspiring spirit has bounce,” a special article about Debra’s volunteer activities and the **FVC survey** ([Surveyland](#)), appeared in the **Sunday Long Beach Press Telegram** on October 1, 2000, as part of the **Making a Difference** series by community writer, Dawnya Pring.

James Small of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Los Angeles shares with us, "For the Ekstrand Elementary School, I have gone to a first-grade class and read books to the students. One of my favorites, and the students' as well, is Alexander's Awful, Terrible, Really Bad Day. Since the NLRB also conducts certain types of elections among employees, I demonstrated to students the process of a secret ballot election, permitting the students to vote for the first time. They voted on whether they wanted their first grade teacher to be their second grade teacher. For your information, they did. I ride a Harley. At Christmas time, I frequently attend motorcycle events that are known as Toy Runs...organized rides where bikers get together and load their bikes with toys and deliver them to disadvantaged kids, or to sites for distribution to the underprivileged. Often times, in Toy runs, big, burley bikers have teddy bears tied to the backs of their bikes. Most of the organized motorcycle events I attend are charity rides, i.e., the entrance fees for the events go to a charitable cause, such as multiple sclerosis, exceptional children, downed officers' (police and fire officers killed on duty) families, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and The Humane Society. Finally, on several occasions each November, December, and January, I search through my old clothes and blankets, and determine what I'm going to get rid of. I also ask friends and family members to give me their old coats and blankets. Rather than throw away these items, I personally bring the items downtown with me where I work and hand them out to persons who look like they could use them: a bit corny and a bit scary, considering who I have to have contact with to do this. But it still makes me feel good."



Bessie Young, Tax Examining Assistant contributes this, "Since my employment with the IRS 24 years ago, I have become involved with many volunteer activities, such as VITA, painting over graffiti, sweeping sidewalks, Urban League Job Fairs and Graduation Ceremonies, the High School Speakers Program (recently representing the IRS at Hollywood High Career Night), and feeding the homeless. Recently I had a calorie-burning experience when I packed food for the L.A. Regional Food Bank, which was distributed to the needy and charities. I spend one hour as a Reading Coach in my local Library (Baldwin Hills) weekly. This experience has allowed me to attend a workshop to train parents in how to read to their small children. Since summer has arrived, we have taken our students and families on a field trip via bus provided by our Councilman. My most recent student, Brandon (shown below with Bessie), has perfect attendance since he began and is willing to complete any assignment I give. I was so impressed with him I asked him, 'Are you sure you need a coach?' I believe we have completed at least four books since we began." She volunteers to feel good about herself doing it, to increase skills and knowledge, and to make the world better, in that order.

Bessie also served as a Loaned Executive for the Greater Los Angeles Combined Federal Campaign, the largest workplace charity drive in Los Angeles County. She helped collect almost \$4 million in charitable contributions from local Federal employees.

